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A Warning Before the Fact

By VIRGINIA PREWETT

One of the most revealing documents bearing on the 1961 Cuban invasion fiasco is a prophetic secret report written by a member of the Cuban Revolutionary Front—later the Revolutionary Council—before the invasion took place.

It is extremely timely again now that Attorney General Robert Kennedy has stirred up a new controversy over the question of U. S. air cover for the assault—perhaps unwisely, since there are so many people around who understood at the time that such air cover had been pledged.

RESIGNATION

The much broader secret report underlines certain errors in dealing with our Latin American neighbors that have become almost an institution in U. S. policy. A copy of the document given me by its author, Dr. Aureliano Sanchez Arango, when he resigned from the Revolutionary Front five months before the invasion.

Dr. Sanchez Arango submitted the original to the U. S. agencies then mounting the invasion, with the warning that the entire effort would fall unless basic changes in policy were made. The changes were not made and the warning proved true.

The document enumerates an extremely high-handed decision made by the U. S. agencies, which Dr. Sanchez Arango, a long-time foe of both Batista and Castro, calls "an allies."

The basic complaint was that the U. S. did not support Cuban leadership—all exercised in the fight against Batista. Nor did the U. S. follow their advice or their estimate of the Cuban situation in the face of Soviet thrust in the New World.

CONDITION

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The exile committee was asked to run the invasion

was forced to organize in Mexico, in a hostile atmosphere where they could not be effective. Having hamstrung them, he says, the U. S. then insisted on their reorganizing with a top leader, called a "co-ordinator" in order "to be more effective."

Dr. Sanchez Arango warned that this would bitterly split the anti-Castro Cubans both inside and outside Cuba—and it did.

While the Democratic Front's financial support was reduced to one-tenth the original budget, says the secret document, the U. S. began to work with Cuban groups that did not support the Front.

The report emphasized that the U. S. put Radio Swan, the exile's main communication with Cuba, into the control of people who opposed the Front.

It says that the U. S. absolutely refused to allow Cuban leaders to communicate directly with their followers inside Cuba. This was a crippling censorship.

These mistakes were publicly recognized after the invasion failed. But no one has explained why the U. S. ignored Dr. Sanchez Arango's timely warning.